



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

Macron poses the crucial question: what does Europe truly guarantee to Ukraine?



Recent talks between **Emmanuel Macron and European partners** have shown that Europe is entering a new phase in its approach to the war in Ukraine. Instead of rhetoric and political statements, the focus is now on establishing a binding framework.

Macron has proposed that France, the UK, the United States, and Turkey form a working group to define the contours of future **security guarantees for Ukraine**.

These guarantees would be practical rather than symbolic: what happens after the war ends, who responds, within what timeframe, and under what conditions.

This is not simply another diplomatic gesture to demonstrate solidarity with Kyiv. It is a model intended to replace the improvised mix of aid, sanctions and political statements that have characterised the past three years.

Macron is seeking to establish a kind of European security shield without raising the politically sensitive issue of Ukraine's NATO membership.

The working group should determine what kind of international presence can be maintained in Ukraine after the war, how to respond to possible new attacks, and what capabilities the guarantor states must keep ready.

At the same time, the European Union is developing the financial pillar of this strategy. The aim is to use part of the **frozen Russian assets** to provide long-term support for Ukraine's budget and reconstruction.

This would reduce political pressure on member states and avoid renewed debates about contributions from their national budgets. Such a model would also give Kyiv greater predictability in planning. When dealing with billions of euros per year, predictability becomes essential.

From a framework to a practical instrument

All this indicates that Europe is trying to move beyond years of fragmented responses to Russian aggression. France is the most active in this effort. The **United Kingdom** is involved because it has long been Ukraine's most consistent European military partner.

The United States must be included because of its logistical and intelligence capabilities. Turkey is involved due to its unique position, its relationship with Moscow, and its role in the Black Sea.

If these actors are to sign the same document, it must be robust enough not to depend on political changes in any individual country.

This type of guarantee framework presents its own challenges. First, there is the issue of scope. Do the guarantees apply only to potential new attacks, or do they also cover the stabilisation of the territory after the war?

European partners are trying to take the initiative to ensure Ukraine is not left in a vacuum

Then there is the question of response: who would decide on the use of the means and forces available? Without a clear answer, guarantees remain merely a framework, not a practical instrument. Ukraine has repeatedly emphasised this point.

Kyiv is seeking a detailed, practical mechanism, having paid a high price for similar uncertainty in 2014 when the Budapest guarantees failed.

Le Monde noted that now, following the latest shifts in American politics, European partners are trying to take the initiative to ensure Ukraine is not left in a vacuum.

In this context, the talks on guarantees are not only a show of support for Ukraine but also an attempt by Europe to maintain its own relevance in the evolving security system.

If the guarantees are credible, it would mean that Europe is no longer entirely dependent on

the American political cycle. If they are not, European security policy will once again be reduced to postponing the problem.

Testing Europe's internal cohesion

Politically, Macron is also testing Europe's internal cohesion with this initiative. In the past, there was a divide between those who fully supported Ukraine and those who sought a political balance between Kyiv and Moscow.

Now, for the first time, there is an opportunity for a document in which all participating states must define their own obligations. This will demonstrate whether there is a European will for long-term engagement, rather than just short-term aid packages.

Frozen Russian funds represent the only source that is sufficient in scale and politically viable

Military guarantees would need to include intelligence capabilities, airspace control, air defence, and operational support for Ukraine.

This does not mean deploying combat troops in the post-war period, but it does require the constant presence of military experts, monitoring of critical infrastructure, and readiness to respond if Russia violates the peace.

This is the precise moment to showcase the seriousness of European intentions. No promise will have any value without a mechanism that can be activated within hours.

The financial aspect is equally important. Ukraine cannot maintain a stable state if it does not know how much support it will receive over the next three or five years. **Frozen Russian assets** represent the only source that is sufficient in scale and politically viable.

However, their use requires the **consent of all**

EU member states, as well as a precise legal framework. If this issue is not resolved, the entire structure of guarantees will lack a foundation.

How prepared is Europe?

The most important question, however, remains a political one: how prepared are European countries to support Ukraine in the long term?



Ukraine can negotiate only when it has the assured support of its allies should Russia attempt another attack

If the guarantees are clearly formulated, with shared obligations and realistic mechanisms, Europe can demonstrate that it is capable of leading a security policy rather than merely reacting to crises.

If the guarantees remain general statements without operational substance, it will prove that Europe continues to avoid the responsibility that comes with being a political actor.

Macron is trying to accelerate the process because he knows that time is working against Ukraine. Any delay reduces the credibility of the allies and strengthens Moscow's position in future negotiations.

Ukraine can negotiate only when it has the assured support of its allies should Russia attempt another attack. Without this, negotiations would be risky and politically unsustainable for Ukraine. There can be no serious peace arrangement without a robust

security framework.

Europe therefore faces a clear choice. It can choose to shape the post-war order or once again wait for others to take the initiative.

With his approach, Macron has made clear what Paris expects: a binding framework, effective mechanisms, and support that does not depend on the goodwill of individual governments. Anything less would send the message that Europe knows how to talk but not how to act.